For you.
You have everything you will ever need already inside of you. You are a universe.
—Lorraine Cink

For my parents.
Thank you for your support since my childhood.

For anyone giving this book to a child.
Thank you for being someone’s real-life hero.
—Alice X. Zhang

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Sorry about that. Now, where was I?

Ooooo, did you hear that? Before Gwenpool interrupts again, I should mention that I’m Lorraine. I live in New York City, the home of Super Heroes. I can almost see Avengers Mansion® from my office window! Well . . . kinda. There’s a building in the way.

Since I was a girl, Super Heroes have been a big part of my life, and now I get to talk about them every day as part of my work. I live and breathe this stuff on the daily! I know, right? But, I’ve always wished a book existed not just celebrating heroic women in the Marvel Universe, but sharing the struggles, victories, and the lessons we can learn from these laudable ladies. These girls and women can teach us so much more than how to punch hard (though I am HERE! for that, too). They can teach us about growth, passion, our innermost selves, and how to become our own heroes.

So what exactly are the powers of a girl? Whether you were born a girl, identify as a girl, or just appreciate how darn cool girls and former girls (or as you might call them: women) just so happen to be, we know that being a girl can bring you great and unexpected powers. And as Spider-Man®’s Uncle Ben once said, with great power comes great responsibility.

That’s me!

Gwenpool. No. Anyways, this brings us to:

GIRLS: THE ORIGIN STORY

No Super Hero is born as a champion. Even if you just so happen to tumble out of the womb flying, punching hard, embiggening, talking to squirrels, or emitting danger sparkles, the path to heroism requires a choice. The choice to use your powers for good.

That’s why none of these stories really start at birth. They begin when something truly worthwhile happens. And as Spider-Man® and former girls’ Uncle Ben once said, with great power comes great responsibility.

That reminded me . . . from time to time, I might mention boys, or even men, or sometimes boys who put “man” as their name to sound cool. Boys and men are welcome here, too. Everyone is welcome. Hey, we’re all in it together, right? Well, except for maybe the Super Villains.

Hopefully, if any Super Villains are reading this, they will learn to turn over a new leaf and stop being Grade-A jerks. Anyways, while this book will focus on girls and former girls, everybody is welcome to the party because a party alone is . . . well, awkward. Even the most powerful Super Villains share that concern.

Herm-higher is stronger.

So, join me and other True Believers who dare to seek the wisdom of Marvel Super Hero Girls.

As I was saying, girls have many powers, which we’ll explore in this book. And while, yes, some of these girls can fly, punch hard, embiggen, and occasionally emit dangerous sparkles, that is far from what makes them super. Super Heroes come in all shapes, sizes, races, religions, genders, sexualities, outfits, and musical tastes, but there is one thing that they all share.

Gwenpool. No. Anyways, this brings us to:

SACRIFICES AND HARD WORK

Sometimes doing what is right means giving up other things. Spider-Gwen would much rather hang out with her ax-grinding bandmates, the Mary Janes, than save NYC from the Lizard, but you know, not everything can be rock-star jam sessions. Super-powers won’t do all the work for you.

RESPONSIBILITY

It’s not just for Spider-Men anymore. Girls can take responsibility for their actions and their communities. A hero sees the world she lives in and knows she can use her powers to improve it. It’s her responsibility to make her world better if she can.

When Quake sees that the world is being overtaken by evil, instead of submitting, she leads a team of elite forces to save the day. Responsibility also means taking responsibility for her own actions. Even Captain Marvel has made some major mistakes that meant a major (... or military humor) apology to her bestie, Spider-Woman. Perhaps this is a harder kind of responsibility because there is no glory, but it doesn’t make it any less brave.

EMPATHY

Acknowledging the suffering and needs of others is the first signal to any hero that she must dive into action. These girls see their fellow humans, aliens, and sometimes whole planets, and feel their pain, outrage, and fear. Only then will they truly know how to spring into action and save the day. When Captain Marvel sees Thanos, she knows she cannot return to Earth until they have homes because she knows how it must feel to have nowhere to go. This also means she must have empathy for herself, which can be a bootload harder than the others. This is why humble hearts were invented.*

TEAM-UPS

Asking for help when you need it can definitely be a super-power. Girls know that a super-squad gets it done way faster than going it alone, and that sometimes a job takes more than one lady. Whether it’s having equally super ax-grinding bandmates, the Mary Janes, than save NYC from the Lizard, or having a whole crew of confident bae like She-Hulk, or the HEROes of A-Force, girls get the job done—together.

USING HER SMARTS

Girls use their minds. Take fifteen-year-old Riri Williams, who created her own Iron Man suit in her dorm room at MIT. Or Nadia Van Dyne, the second-generation Wasp who started her own lab of geniuses after deciding that lady scientists weren’t getting enough attention. Even the greatest super-geniuses in her mind with education, reading, exploiting, getting messy, and stoking the flames of her curiosity. At only nine years old, Lunella Lafayette is the smartest character in the entire Marvel Universe, but she still has a lot to learn.

BEING BRAVE

Girls do brave things! Being brave can mean everything from standing up for what one believes in to simply facing the almighty Thanos. Girls don’t want to do. Honestly, the latter is often harder than the former. But don’t be mistaken. Being brave doesn’t mean she always feels imperious or is never scared. In fact, what makes her so brave is that she keeps going when she feels the most afraid.

Ms. Marvel was petrified that she’d disappoint her family by taking on her Super Hero persona—not to mention putting herself in personal peril—but she knew she had to do something, even if it was anything but right to protect the lives of her fellow New Jersey teens.

Okay, are you ready? These girls are going to do some awesome things. They’re going to beat up bad guys, break through to other dimensions, and save the freaking universe!
CAPTAIN MARVEL
ACE PILOT. SPARKLEFISTS. LADY BOSS.

Carol Danvers grew up in a Boston military family with her parents and two brothers. Although it was a steep uphill battle in her time, Carol needed to fly. So she joined the Air Force as soon as she turned eighteen (despite the protests of her father, who believed women weren’t as capable as men), taking inspiration from women like aviation hero Helen Cobb. It can be very hard to push past the limits others place on you, but Carol knew she must follow her own dreams. She pushed herself to become a top-of-her-class fly girl. Before long, she was bravely piloting an elite Stark plane through enemy territory under the code name “Cheeseburger”—delicious and deadly. Carol retired from the Air Force as a colonel, and became the head of security for NASA. Oh, did I not yet mention Carol is a straight-up boss? Yeah! She was breaking down barriers long before she got super-powers, silencing anyone who doubted that women were capable of incredible things.

At NASA, Carol met Captain Mar-Vell, a Kree alien who was also a Super Hero on the side. I know what you’re thinking. Wait, isn’t Mar-Vell a lot like Marvel? Well, yes! And for good reason. Carol developed her powers when she was caught in a conflict between Captain Mar-Vell, his foe Yon-Rogg, and a large alien machine called a Psyche-Magnitron. During their alien skirmish, Carol absorbed a great deal of radiation that unlocked Kree powers within her body. However, they lay dormant until months later—more on that soon.

After aiding Captain Mar-Vell, who was under government investigation, Carol Danvers’s career at NASA quickly deteriorated. I mean, she saved the world but pissed off the government. Classic Super Hero mistake. While everything was falling apart, Carol reawakened her passion for writing and began working for Woman magazine, owned by the Daily Bugle. There she became BFFs with Mary Jane Watson (ya know, Spider-Man’s on-again-off-again bae) and enjoyed a normal life until she began having strange blackouts. During these blackouts, new super-powers emerged and transformed her into the Super Hero Ms. Marvel. Yeah, that’s right. Ms. Marvel. And thus, Princess Sparklefists was born! Carol eventually mastered her gifts and began aiding Super Hero teams on the reg. She eventually joined the Avengers as one of their major players. In her early days (and later days, for that matter) she had A LOT of drama: The Avengers and Carol have always been on-again, off-again, so let’s just say sometimes she was seeing other Super Hero teams.

**Skills:**
- Ace pilot
- Master combatant
- Espionage / super-spy
- Multilingual, including alien languages such as Kree and Shi’ar
- Talented writer

**Name:** Carol Danvers

**Alias:** Captain Marvel

**Super-powers:** Flight; energy absorption and photon blasts that make her hands sparkle; super-strength; speed; stamina; durability

**Nicknames:** Ace, Princess Sparklefists
Ms. Marvel. As you can imagine, all of this name-changing had her ready to take a little solo time. Carol had always been a military girl, so when Tony Stark needed to enforce the Super Hero Registration Act, Ms. Marvel was ready to lend her muscle to the fight. All super-powered people were forced to register with the government, which created a civil war between Super Heroes. Her best friends were torn apart and fighting—anyone who has lived through high school knows how that goes.

In the wake of all of these global upsets, a new and super-not-cool power arose: Norman Osborn (as in the Green Goblin—yeah, that Norman Osborn). Well, he tried to convince Ms. Marvel to join his Dark Avengers, but she refused, because she knew a jerk when she sees one. Instead she joined the NEW AVENGERS to stop Osborn’s evil agenda and protect the world in secret alongside Captain America, the biggest teddy bear in the good ol’ U.S.-of-A. With only slightly world-ending consequences, Osborn was defeated and the Super Hero Registration Act was repealed. Phew! Ms. Marvel had finally found her home again with Earth’s Mightiest Heroes. I mean, what a world takeover every now and then, anyway? 😈

But When Did Carol Get Pants?!

Finally, courtesy of Tony Stark, Captain Marvel was given a fancy new flight suit (WITH PANTS, because fighting bad guys is hard enough without your butt showing!). Captain America suggested that Carol had earned a new title to go with her new look: CAPTAIN MARVEL.

Carol had to do some soul-searching. Mourning the death of her aviation hero and mentor, Helen Cobb, Carol realized that without women like Helen who paved the road before her, Carol Danvers claimed the name Captain Marvel, a symbol of greatness. Just as Helen paved the road for Carol, Carol must now make way and support future women Super Heroes.

And that’s just what she has done. Captain Marvel has saved the world countless times, traveled the cosmos with her cat, CHEWIE (who might just be the cutest and creepiest alien in the universe), and spent tons of time hanging with her bestie, Spider-Woman. Now she focuses on protecting the Earth and other planets across the galaxy. Not a bad gig, really.

Carol took on the code name Ms. Marvel when she became a Super Hero because of her creation during the Women’s Liberation Movement. During this time, honorifics for women were either Miss (if unmarried) or Mrs. (if partnered). However, you will notice men are noted as Mr. whether or not they are married, meaning maybe their status isn’t greater or less depending on if they locked it down or not. Around the same time Carol Danvers showed up in comics, the title Ms. began to be adopted as an honorific for women in hopes of giving them equal opportunity to that of men, regardless of marital status. When Ms. Marvel was given her name, it meant she wasn’t there to be married or to be single—she was there to kick some butts and save some days.
BIEN, MI FAMILIA! First off, you need to know that AMERICA CHAVEZ likes to punch hard. Not only is she good at it, she has a no-BS policy of punch first and ask questions later when it comes to villains. She is notorious for her sassy mouth, bangin’ style, and a smirk that puts Tony Stark to shame. But don’t get me wrong—just because America is a cool girl doesn’t mean she is a mean girl. When it comes to friendship, America is THERE for it. We’d all be lucky to have or be a friend as supportive as America. Oh! You probably should also know that she hails from a dimension made up exclusively of women called Utopia, but trust me, she is all-American.

America Chavez’s story begins on PLANETA FUERTONA (part of Utopia so, you know, all women here, too), a world that was invaded by insectoid parasites called La Legion. Super-gross. Think giant evil roaches. Nooo thanks! The gods that created Planeta Fuertona sent an ice age over the planet to cleanse it of the invaders. America’s grandmother Madrimar punched a star portal (pretty tough abuela) through to the Utopian Parallel, an alternate dimension. There the women of Fuertona could be safe and wait for their planet to heal, and, ya know, not freeze their cookies off.

America’s mothers, Amalia and Elena, met and fell in love in this alternate dimension. On the day of America’s birth, Madrimar left the Utopian Parallel to go back to rebuild Planeta Fuertona. America had a relatively normal and happy existence as a tiny girl who gained super-powers from absorbing the DEMIURGE. What’s the Demiurge, you ask? Just a sentient life force that seeded the planets and created the elder gods. Stay with me, people. America and her family of literal strong women were imbued with power punches, interdimensional travel through star portals, and of course, flight through those perfectly punched star portals. Can you imagine having so many super-powered ladies to look up to? Sure, you can! They’re everywhere, even if our dimension tends to have ladies with different kinds of powers.

When America was only six years old, black holes threatened to engulf her home in the Utopian Parallel. To save their people, America’s mothers sacrificed themselves to heal the rift that threatened their dimension. This left them “smeared” across the multiverse. Not the ideal afterlife for your parents, but still . . . a bit cosmically romantic. I mean, it is very heroic but not super-great for a little kid who suddenly has no parents. America, bereft and grieving, hastily exited the last portal from the Utopian Parallel into the outer dimensions. She hoped to TRAVEL THE STARS and become a hero like her

Skills: Natural leader
Hand-to-hand combat
Bilingual
Grade-A flirt
Unofficial Deity: Selena (not Gomez)

Super-powers: Flight
Super-strength
Super-speed
Invulnerability to physical harm (but not to feels)
Interdimensional portal creation
Time travel TBD (she’s working on it)

Weaknesses: Oreo ice cream
Cute text messages
America Chavez. America’s newfound ability to focus and plan, up to do. the drama behind, and America still had lots of growing not long after. Hey, sometimes it’s better to just leave parted ways due to “musical differences,” aka #DRAMA, be hard, especially when you’re still just a kid yourself. heroic footsteps. Living up to your parents’ feats can joined the Teen Brigade. Her next team had her joining up with Earth’s ladies in her sorority, LLMPPTB shares striking cultural similarities America’s home dimension kindness of strangers to survive. found our Earth, accepting the not have her familia to care for as she grew up, she was forced to learn to protect herself. She punched first and asked questions later. This made America TOUGH, RESILIENT, AND FIERCE, but she still had plenty of lessons to learn about being a hero. America wandered until she found our Earth, accepting the kindness of strangers to survive. America’s home dimension shares striking cultural similarities with Earth’s own Latinx community, and because of this she easily found a home on Earth. At just sixteen, America joined the Teen Brigade to follow in her mothers’ heroic footsteps. Living up to your parents’ feats can be hard, especially when you’re still just a kid yourself. However, the Teen Brigade didn’t last very long, as they parted ways due to “musical differences,” aka DRAMA, not long after. Hey, sometimes it’s better to just leave the drama behind, and America still had lots of growing up to do.

Her next team had her joining up with Earth’s mightiest teens! America was recruited by a younger and somewhat less-evil-than-usual Loki to join the Young Avengers. She became best of friends with the magical Wiccan, bullying Hulkling, genius Prodigy, alien bad boy Noh-Varr, and her soon-to-be BFF Kate Bishop (aka the best Hawkeye). Together they faced an interdimensional parasite named Mother that took on the form of the team’s (you guessed it) mothers. As you can imagine, this was very hard for America, who had two moms, both of whom are multiverse smurfs. America obvioulsy punched a heap-ton of mothers, eventually banishing the beast and winning the day. But in hopping dimensions and fighting enough mothers to need to have a sit-down with Freud, America realized maybe it was time for her to stop trying to fill her mothers’ footsteps and start adulting for real. She took a break from the team to regroup and focus a bit on her solo dreams. Once the multiverse got back to being less “multi” and more “uni,” America got to kicking it with an amazing Super Hero team called the Ultimates, including the crazy-powerful Blue Marvel, the light-wielding Monica Rambeau, the king himself, Black Panther, and the one-and-only Captain Marvel. She also began dating a super-adorable Earth girl named Lisa Halloran. However, #DRAMA would be back. This time in the form of predictive justice (aka using the visions of an Inhuman named Ulysses to stop violence before it started). The Super Hero community was torn apart with major chaos. Then she traveled to Westchester, New York, where Storm taught her to meditate and calm herself during a storm. America’s newfound ability to focus and plan would soon be put to the test.

The money-grubbing, leather-clad super-freak known as Exterminatrix infiltrated Sotomayor University. She hoped to use America and others to build weaponry for the Midas Foundation. Posing as an administrator and abusing the campus political system, Exterminatrix attempted to lock down and silence the student body. America normally would have gotten angry and started a slug-fest she might not have been able to win. After all, Exterminatrix had taken away America and her fellow students’ autonomy! And political voice! Not only was that a jerk move, but it was totally dangerous for all the students at Sotomayor! Fortunately, now America knew she had to use her calm and focus if she wanted to conquer this corrupt and abusive system. Using her newfound skills, America was able to expose the leather-clad bad girl’s evil plot and punch her back to space. Okay, so maybe you can punch some of your problems.

The College Years

America decided after dealing with so much teen (and adult) angst that maybe she should focus on her education. So she did what any red-blooded America would do and signed up for interdimensional Super Hero college at Sotomayor University. Any burgeoning young adult wants to make sure they get the best possible education, and sometimes that means moving far from home. In fact, sometimes that means leaving your dimension altogether to find the school that is the right fit for your kind of hero. America’s main squeeze, Lisa Halloran, saw that they were literally moving apart (like, light-years apart) and ended things. America was heartbroken, but with time and a road trip with her BFF, Kate Bishop, she eventually saw that separating was for the best. And better yet, Lisa and America were able to remain friends after a little distance. At Sotomayor U, America spent mad hang-time with her boy-genius bad Prodigy and found a new Girl Squad with the ladies of LLMPPTB, a sorority of brilliant bad bae. She even was lucky enough to be reunited with her abuela Madrimar. America learned through time travel arranged by her grandmother and her instructor Professor Douglas how to use her head and not just her fists. Traveling back in time to WWII, she was taught by Peggy Carter how to make a battle plan, and maybe even punched Hitler for Captain America. You go, girl! Then she traveled to Westchester, New York, where Storm taught her to meditate and calm herself during a storm. America’s newfound ability to focus and plan would soon be put to the test.

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College Besties: Prodigy, Xandra, and the ladies in her sorority, LLMPPTB (Leelumultipass Phi Theta Beta)

On-Again/Off-Again Boo: Lisa Halloran

Punch-o-Meter: 11 out of 10 Punches

Young Avengers Group Chat

Check out who I found at Sotomayor U! He’s a real PRODIGY!

OMG! Come visit me!

Hello, laa8888ooooooss.

Hello, laa8888ooooooss.

New yambit. Who dis?

Dis girl ready to punch you back to Asgard. :)

Sooo . . . America likes to punch her problems. There isn’t a battle she can’t solve with her fists—or at least that’s what she thought for a very long time. However, part of growing up is learning how to keep your lucidity when things are at their worst. Learning how to plan your next moves and breathe through life’s difficulties is much, much harder than throwing punches. America is working on her focus through breath, meditation, and using her mind before her muscles. This is greatly aided by leaning on her friends. When in a difficult situation, though America can be a bit of a lone wolf, turning to her friends and mentors for guidance offers her new clarity and perspective to help her win the day. Oh, and it’s a lot more fun than dealing with a problem by herself.
**SCIENCE SQUAD**

**IN THESE PAGES,** prepare to meet some of Marvel’s greatest scientific minds!

From Lunella Lafayette, the smartest person in the world, to the S.H.I.E.L.D. research scientist Mockingbird, to Riri Williams, the fifteen-year-old dynamo who reverse engineered her own Iron Man armor—these ladies have got STEM on lock! Let’s do some research of our own, shall we?

---

**G.I.R.L. Scientific Research Collective**

This badass lab was founded by **NADIA VAN DYNE** with the help of her stepmother, Janet Van Dyne! In Nadia’s own words, G.I.R.L. (Genius In action Research Labs) is “dedicated to finding the brilliant girls and women who will not just save the world, but change it.” LaShayla “Shay” Smith, Priya Aggarwal, Taina Miranda, and Ying (G.I.R.L.’s faithful members) are housed at **PYM LABS,** where Nadia works in her father Hank Pym’s old laboratory. (You might remember him as the original Ant-Man.) In addition, the lab has some of the greatest research tech around. It has Iso works best under pressure.

**VIVIAN “VIV” VISION Synthezoid Technology Expert**

Imagine if you had a friend who emitted Wi-Fi? Viv is the ultimate technological mind, because she IS technology. When her father, Vision, found himself single but ready to settle down, he just created an Android Family of his own. Viv is a microchip off the old block with a brain out of a SUPER COMPUTER! She comes complete with internet access and a search engine at the ready. No wonder she knows it all!

---

**XIAOYI “ISO” CHEN**

**Engineer, Terrigen Expert**

Iso, a New Inhuman, is a mechanical and engineering genius. She was selected by the Inhuman Queen Medusa to work on a cure for a disease plaguing mutants. A huge job for a Burgeoning Scientist! Iso was more than up to the task. Especially when you consider her Inhuman ability to control pressure systems. You might even say Iso works best under pressure.

---

**DR. WILMA CALVIN**

**S.H.I.E.L.D. Biochemist**

Meet one of Marvel’s earliest notable scientists who has been breaking barriers for women of color in STEM since 1972! Dr. Wilma Calvin was assisted by none other than Bobbi Morse in her early days as a scientist. This position would later inspire Bobbi to become one of S.H.I.E.L.D.’s greatest agents—Mockingbird. Wilma also uncovered the greatest secrets of the Super-Soldier Serum that gave Captain America his famed strength. Dr. Calvin has created the serum’s closest approximation since its inception with her work for “**PROJECT: GLADIATOR.**”

---

**ELENA BLOODSTONE**

**Archaeologist, Monster Hunter**

This straight-shooting Brit was born into a long line of Monster Hunters, which means she doesn’t like to just track down horrific beasts, she studies them, too! In order to pursue these oft-antediluvian beings, she has become an expert in ancient civilizations, dead languages, folklore, and monster biology. All of which she uses to track down malicious creatures and obliterate them. Her achievements have even landed her a professorship at the Braddock Academy in her home country of Great Britain.

---

**MOON GIRL**

**Genius Inventor**

Though Lunella Lafayette is only nine years old, she is the Smartest Person on Earth! Her Super Hero name, Moon Girl, was originally what her peers used to mockingly call her, for her love of space. She’s still just a kid, but her youthful imagination often results in ingenious inventions adults might never even consider! From her spring-loaded skates to her fully functioning cybernetic Lego triceratops, Lunella never limits her creativity. Oh, and she’s even been featured as a guest speaker at the interdimensional Super Hero college SOTOMAYOR UNIVERSITY!

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**ANNA MARIA MARCONI**

**Chemistry, Physics, and Cybernetics Specialist**

Though some may underestimate her due to her small stature, Anna Maria Marconi is a genuine scientific genius. She first met Peter Parker while he was finishing his doctoral. She became his chemistry and physics tutor. Yes, she straight-up schooled Spider-Man! She was immediately hired by Parker Industries, where she became one of the world’s most advanced research scientists. She even helped Doctor Octopus take on more HEROIC CYBERNETIC WORKS, which she continued after his control over Peter Parker’s body ceased.

---

**IRONHEART**

**Advance Technologies**

Riri Williams’s true superpower is her GENIUS as an engineer. Graduating high school at fifteen years old, she headed off to college at MIT where she was able to reverse engineer her own Iron Man armor in the school lab. With the blessing of Tony Stark and added bonus of her own personal Stark Artificial Intelligence system, Riri now fights crime as Ironheart. She continues to improve the functionality of her Ironheart tech, because any machine can always be better, faster, and smarter.
KAMALA KHAN is one of the greatest heroes in the Marvel Universe, and it’s not because she has a lot of hero experience. She’s a devoted friend and daughter. She works hard in school. She is a level-five orc wizard in *World of Warcraft*. She writes Super Hero fanfic. But most importantly, Kamala cares. She sees the world as it is and wants to make it an even better place.

Kamala is one of the few heroes who does everything in her power not to destroy a building, because she knows that it belongs to a small-business owner. She asks herself if someone really needs to be punched or if there’s a less fist-forward solution at hand. Kamala is a leader—not because she forces people to obey her, but because people follow her example.

KAMALA KHAN is the Pakistani American girl next door. She loves sci-fi, video games, and geek culture, and she’s a serious Super Hero fangirl. She has loving parents who try to instill in her traditional Muslim values, which means being a good person, doing your homework, steering clear of drugs and alcohol, and not spending time alone with boys.

One Friday night, Kamala asked her parents if she could attend a party with some of her friends from school, but of course with the possibility of drugs, alcohol, and definitely boys, her parents sent her to her room instead. Feeling suffocated by all those rules, Kamala made a break for it and sneaked out.

Down at the party on the waterfront, she could see the wreck of *Attilan* in the harbor (which, if you remember, had fallen into the Hudson River). Kamala caught up with her friends, but between insults from her frenemies and the uncomfortable pressure to drink, she decided to bail and headed for home. Soon after she left, though, she found herself surrounded by strange mists, and something about the turn this night was taking started to feel seriously weird. A cocoon engulfed her and the mist—made of Terrigen—kickstarted a process known as “terrigenesis.” Turns out that unbeknownst to her or her family, Kamala was an INHUMAN, and the Terrigen Mists activated her Inhuman genes, transforming her.

When Kamala awoke, she found herself with fantastic new powers. She realized she could shape-shift parts of her body (her fists, for example), making them very large and increasing her strength (a process she calls *embiggening*). She could also make herself very small, take on different appearances, and bend her body like putty.

Feeling a sense of duty to her hometown, Jersey City, she took on the moniker MS. MARVEL in a nod to her Jersey Besties: Nakia, Bruno

**Name:** Kamala Khan

**Alias:** Ms. Marvel

**Super-powers:** Shape-shifting
Healing factor
*Embiggening*
Proportional strength to size

**Skills:** Straight-A student
Gifted scientist
Fanfic writer

**Base:** Jersey City, NJ
longtime hero, Captain Marvel, who had used the name previously. When baddies ventured across the river from New York City, Kamala was there to stop them.

The Inhuman Queen Medusa took an early interest in Kamala and her heroic tendencies. At the newly rebuilt Inhuman city of New Attilan, Medusa took Kamala under her wing for training, and even sent her teleporting canine, Lockjaw, to aid Kamala on her journey. Her actually-maybe-pretty-cute best friend, Bruno, was one of very few to know her secret and aid her as well.

Her friend Bruno . . . well, Kamala finally gave Bruno time to talk, and he confessed his love for her. Though she knew it was important to figure out her feelings for him, she had other priorities. Even if her rejection meant he would move on to someone else, her life as a hero was simply more important than romantic entanglements. Her priority was saving the world, becoming the greatest Super Hero she could be, and learning things in school—plenty of time for romance in the future when she was ready for love.

Kamala saved the day and even got to fight alongside her hero, Captain Marvel. Captain Marvel gave Kamala a necklace that featured both their symbols—Captain Marvel’s STAR OF HALA and Ms. Marvel’s LIGHTNING BOLT—and provided emergency GPS should Kamala ever need to be found.

Even though she had proven herself as a Super Hero, Ms. Marvel felt disconnected from her life as Kamala Khan. Kamala returned to her family and confessed to her mother that she was Ms. Marvel. While she braced for impact, her mother revealed that she’d already known. In fact, she was very proud to call herself the Inventor, and even her frenemy, Zoe, who, with time, became more friend than enemy.

Kamala’s morals wouldn’t allow her to continue being a part of the team. She cut ties with the CHAMPIONS before their fists. Using Viv’s search-engine-like brain, they could find people around the world who needed their help, so that they might protect them. But even more importantly, the Super Heroes began to learn about helping others the way they needed, rather than the way they thought people needed to be helped. Ms. Marvel reminded herokind that being a hero is less about punching bad guys and more about helping those who need it—helping can still be fun! Now, let’s go EMBIGGEN something!
**Ironheart**

**Inventor. Accidental Queen. Iron Will.**

What do you get when you mix the gumption and genius of a pint-size tech prodigy with the heart and enthusiasm of a pint-size tech prodigy? Ironheart, obviously! **Riri Williams** is a fifteen-year-old **Super-genius** with her own Iron Man-style armor and a whole lot of tenacity. Her endless inquisitiveness and dedication have given her the skills (and the machine) needed to be a Super Hero. Though her suit does the bulk of the heavy lifting, Riri’s true super-power is hard work and intellectual curiosity. No one has put Riri to the test more than herself. She was never tasked with reverse engineering an Iron Man armor—she did it to prove to herself that she could.

We can all take a page from Riri’s instruction manual and make our hobbies our life’s work, if we put our minds to it and follow our intellectual interests. It just takes a dash of **bravery** and a whole lot of hard work. Each device and piece of Riri’s mech suit requires endless iterations, but the process can be the fun part! Riri gets to discover something new every day and make it better. And trust me, something can always be better. Take it from me, a woman writing a book.

As a small child, Riri was highly intelligent. Even at a very young age, she became fascinated with building things, which evolved into a love of creating new technology. Though Riri was thrilled by her intellectual endeavors, she tended to be a solitary child. Children her age just couldn’t match wits with her, but her parents wanted Riri to enjoy a normal childhood. Luckily, Riri fell into a close friendship with her neighbor Natalie. They didn’t necessarily always share the same interests, but Natalie respected Riri’s eccentricities and reminded her to be a kid every now and then. The girls grew very close, and Natalie was one of the few people who understood Riri.

Riri continued to stoke the fires of her creativity, eager to understand the world around her. Did I mention that **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) can be very creative? STEM may have a reputation for being left-brained, but it takes wild imagination to dream up new machines, formulas, and hypotheses about the world. Riri drew her greatest STEM inspiration from the astronaut **Mae Jemison**, who faced great challenges as the first African American woman to go into space, in 1992. Riri wasn’t often challenged by her education, but she begged one of her teachers to create more challenges to help her be more like Jemison. That way she, too, would have something to fight for and against. Her teacher finally acquiesced and halfheartedly

**Names:** Riri Williams  
**Alias:** Ironheart  
**Bases:** Chicago, MIT Dorms  
(Cambridge, Massachusetts)  
**Squad:** Champions  
**Mentors and Helpful Grown-ups:** A.I. Tony Stark, Pepper Potts, Mary Jane Watson, Amanda Armstrong, Friday (Tony’s A.I.), Mrs. Williams  
**Childhood Bestie:** Natalie
told her she’d never be as good as Tony Stark at building tech. From that day forward, Riri set out to beat Tony Stark at his own game.

At Natalie’s urging, Riri and her parents attended what was supposed to be a joyful church picnic in a Chicago park. Unfortunately, instead of summer fun, shots rang out. Riri’s stepfather and Natalie were hit by a drive-by shooter in a random act of violence. Neither survived the attack. Riri’s mother was devastated to lose another husband to gun violence. Riri lost not only her second father, but the only true friend she’d ever had. She dealt with her pain by throwing herself into her work like never before. She shut out the pain and kept herself busy. Very busy. Riri graduated from high school early and was accepted into the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) when she was just fifteen years old.

At MIT, Riri had all kinds of resources and tools that had never been available to her before. Using materials found on her campus, she reverse engineered Iron Man’s mech suit and created her own FLYING DEFENSIVE ARMOR. Riri would never have to watch the people around her die in a senseless act of violence again. However, when campus security caught wind of her little project, Riri fled, going on the lam around the US.

In New Mexico, she had her first experience with stopping escaped criminals, but her armor was damaged in the fray. She wasn’t quite ready for prime time. Returning to her mother’s home in Chicago, she set out to repair and improve her armor as best she could. Guess who was there waiting for her? Tony flippin’ Stark! I guess when you straight-up steal someone’s style, they take notice pretty quickly. Awkward! Tony was truly impressed, though. With Stark’s surprise blessing, Riri chose to follow in his technological footsteps as a hero. As you can imagine, her mother was less than thrilled that her only daughter was risking her life to protect the world. However, it was also painfully clear from the tragedies she had suffered that someone needed to protect people. What’s more, she believed in her daughter.

Riri trained at Stark’s facility, playing war games with his other armor suits and learning the finer points of being a hero. Things were going pretty great—until Tony was injured during a SUPER HERO CIVIL WAR. Seeing a definite need for someone to take up the mantle, Riri decided to take over for Iron Man as her alter ego, Ironheart. Though Tony was no longer around to guide her, he was kind enough to leave behind an A.I. system built from his own personality and memories. In hologram form, A.I. Tony Stark continued to assist Riri with her day-to-day problems and helped her to pilot her new Ironheart armor.

Having mentors is important for young people (and honestly, not-so-young people, too). No one knows the trials and tribulations of a field more than those who work in and around it. Fortunately, Pepper Potts, Tony’s former girlfriend, past Stark Industries bigwig, and part-time hero, was also available to help Riri with the armor. They first became acquainted when the Techno Golem, Tomoe, tried to relieve both ladies of their armor using her technological manipulation. Luckily, Riri was able to outsmart Tomoe using nothing but a crappily laptop, a homemade techno virus, and a fire extinguisher. Not Bad.

Pepper was impressed and was ready to give Riri her leave, but they had attracted more attention. The skirmish brought S.H.I.E.L.D. knocking—specifically S.H.I.E.L.D.’s executive director, SHARON CARTER. In the aftermath of the fight, Sharon recognized Riri’s talents and tried to recruit her. S.H.I.E.L.D. could offer Riri exciting opportunities to become a real hero. However, Riri was in no hurry to sacrifice her autonomy for a black-and-white uniform. Though Sharon was none too pleased with Riri’s decision, she decided to be there when Riri needed her most—whether Riri wanted her help or not.

When it came to her daily activities, Tony’s executive assistant, Mary Jane Watson, and his biological mother and CEO of Stark Industries, Amanda Armstrong, were also there to help Riri. In fact, Riri had a whole crew to assist her on her journey. Cultivating mentors might seem a strange process, but seeking out those who can help you can change your life. It certainly changed Riri’s.

Riri was well on her way to becoming a full-fledged Super Hero. She even (only sort of accidentally) freed the corrupt country of Latveria. Defeating the evil ruler Lucia Von Bardas in battle, Riri became Latveria’s de facto QUEEN! Listening to the concerns of the Latverian people, Riri saw they weren’t evil—just desperately in need of assistance. Previously, the Latverian people would have had to resort to less-than-moral means to get their basic needs met. It’s no wonder so many turned to lives of crime! Riri laid out a plan to get the country back on track before departing the monarchy. The job of running a country, on top of the demands of her college and Super Hero schedule, would pose real difficulties. So she set up a fair election process that restored democracy and helped the country get back on its now-democratic feet.

Riri continues sharing her iron heart with the people who need her help and the baddies who need straightening out. She often lends her muscle to THE CHAMPIONS, the teenage Super Hero team that solves the problems that adults can’t solve or sometimes overlook. Riri is even on the short list for the NOBEL PEACE PRIZE! There is little Riri can’t do if she puts her mind to it. Let’s all strive to be as driven, passionate, and intellectually curious as Riri!